

[A. G. Anderson]

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From F. C. by

Mrs. Gussie Hale P. W.

Pioneer Experiences and

Cowboy Tales of Early Days.

EDITORIAL FIELD COPY

by

Mrs. Florence Angermiller P. W. UVALDE COUNTY, DISTRICT #10

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A. G. ANDERSON

Uvalde, Texas.

Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Anderson who live one mile west of town on the old Fort Clark road, are both active physically and mentally. Mr. Anderson has retired from ranch life but enjoys talking over old times with his friends and acquaintances. Spending many years of their earlier life in the Pecos country, they are discontent with Uvalde County, and would willingly go back to west Texas if they could sell their home. Asking him about some of his cowboy experiences, he told incidents of his life in the following breezy manner:

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"I was so small they floated me across the Mississippi River in a thimble. I was about 14 years old when I became a ranch hand. My father bought a small place and of course the country was all open and we had all the territory we wanted for ranching. The country wasn't settled at all — just a few houses scattered here and yonder.

"I was 18 years old when I started out to work for myself, working for my brother-in-law on his ranch. I worked first one place then another, and when I would get out of work I would buy a wild horse and break him. That was just an amusing job for me. In 1864 I went to Bestrop County and worked one year for Sears and Walton. Sears was also our Congressman then. This was about a 4,000 acre ranch and was fenced in. C12 - Texas

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After that, I left there and went to [?] and went up the trail to North Texas, with a herd of 2,500 head of cattle for Jim Brown, Bill Williamson and a fellow by the name of Hutcherson. It took us about two months to make the trip. We had ten or eleven men in the outfit. We had a good drive as we never had a run.

"Coming back west I went to Caldwell County and stayed there about a month. You see I didn't stay nowhere long, I was just a [roaming cowboy?] then.

"In '90, I went to Edwards County and begin work on Dragoo's ranch and along about that time I met Miss Mattie Jackson. So on the 26th day of December, 1893, we were married. We married eighteen miles north of Rocksprings on the 'Wires' ranch, on the dry prong of South Llano.

"No we didn't have any celebration," said his wife, "As soon as the ceremony was over we got on our horses and rode twenty miles horseback to the Henderson ranch. We killed a rabbit on the way and when we got home we had fried rabbit and a glass of milk for supper."

"No, we didn't either," Mr. Anderson put in, "but we did take that twenty-mile ride.

"After we were married I worked for Old Man Henderson for awhile. But he was the last man I worked for; after I left him I went to work for myself. I laughed one day at Old Man Henderson, after I had brought the horses in and we had saddled and started out. As I galloped to catch up with him, his horse swollered his head. In a few jumps, off the old man went. I managed to keep my face straight, and said, 'Are you hurt?' He said, 'No by God, go catch my horse!' I had to run the horse about two miles before I could catch him, but I laughed so hard I had to hold to my saddle horn to keep from falling off. I was never thrown from any horse after I got into the saddle.

"Once out on the plains up in the Panhandle country, I went to get 3 on a locoed horse, and as I went to mount and caught the cheek of the bridle, he slung me full length of the bridle rains but when I got up, I got on him and rode him. Oh, you take a bad locoed horse, they are really crazy. If you try to drive one over a wagon rut he won't go. Loco is caused from a weed they eat, and the way they get started to eating it is because it's the first weed to come up in the spring and the stock are hungry for something green and they eat it. I have seen big patches of it. It looks just like a pretty turnip patch. It has an effect on stock just like morphine does on people — when they got started they can't quit', they just go wild after it. Yes, they stay loco as long as they live. The horses are never any account after they once get locoed. When you ride them two or three miles they are give out. I guess there were one-hundred and fifty head of horses out there on that ranch that was locoed.

"Once out on the plains I bought a big black horse. His mane and tail was long and wavy just like it had been platted. He wasn't a bad horse and didn't pitch much when I rode him , just reared up almost fell over backwards with me. He made one of the best saddle horses I ever rode.

"About as bad a pitching horse as I ever owned was also a big black horse. He was sure a hard-pitching horse. He pitched about two-hundred yards with me once and when he quit pitching, my hat was off and my heels were in my boot tops. When he quit pitching, my wife says, 'Now get off that horse and don't you ever get on him again; let him go with the wild bunch.' But I told her no I was going to ride him to cow camp. Then I got to camp the boys all knew what a bad horse he was and one of them said I didn't ride him. I said, 'All right I'll bet you five-hundred dollars I can ride him slick.' But he wouldn't call my bet. I rode him all day and worked cattle on him. But I sold him next day, for when he was pitching 4 I kind of lost my eye sight. Everything got dark just like it does when it comes a blue norther. The man I sold him to said he never did pitch with him.

"When I ranched out on the Pecos, I only owned about three sections of land and used about fifty sections. The Pecos River country was fine grazing and that old river never was up high enough to cause any terrible floods while I was there but after rises in the river, we always had to ride the river bed to get cattle out of the quicksand. This was usually after the river had gone down and we would have to dig them out. If there was water and sand both we could tromp them out. But when we had to dig them out they had the longest legs you ever saw. One thing about the water in the Pecos River — if you get wet in it, it won't give you a cold. I stayed wet one time for eight or ten days, crossing a bunch of sheep and it never made me the least bit sick.

"I had a little , boy pony once when we lived out on the Pecos that was my favorite horse, he didn't have any other name[-?]I just called him 'Pony.' He was a good cow horse and would stand a lot of hard riding. I told my wife when we first married she could lend any thing on the ranch except three things — that was my saddle horse, my gun and my saddle. So one morning I was gone and a man come riding up to the house on a horse that was give out. He said a man had got shot a short distance from there and he wanted a fresh horse to go get the doctor in Sheffield, a distance of ten miles. My wife told him that I had always told her not to lone my saddle horse, but under these circumstances she

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would. But she warned him not to ride him too fast. So he took Pony and was back in thirty minutes. My wife saw how hard the horse had been rode, so she made the man put a rope on him and she walked him for an hour so he wouldn't be stiff from the ride.

"Well , come to find out, this man had shot the other man himself.

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Another man had gone for the doctor and this man wanted [?] to meet the doctor on so he could kill him. The doctor had cut across the mountain and this man went around the road so he missed him. The shooting took place at a dance near Sheffield on the Pecos. He thought the fellow knew too much on him was why he shot him.

"Once out on the Pecos, there were two men who were ranching together. One was a Dutchman. I don't remember his name, but the other was Henry Green. Green claimed he had bought the Dutchman out and was wearing his watch and chain and riding his horses. The old Dutchman never would let any one ride his horses. Green claimed he had a bill of sale to the Dutchman's stock and he had gone back to Germany. I guess he had. Several years later, some boys were hunting with dogs and they chased a fox up a tree and the boys ran over a skeleton. This was up in a canyon on the Pecos right close to old Fort Lancaster. A dentist identified his teeth. He knew he had done the work and when he done it. It was the old Dutchman.

"In the meantime, Green had gone out to New Mexico and went to work on a ranch. The next day he had some words with his boss, and the boss emptied his pistol into Green. Before he died he said, 'You've killed me but if I had my gun, I would get you.' Then he died.

"Up near San Angelo once, a cowboy rode up on an old Dutch sheep herder herding his sheep on the cowboy's range. He told the Dutchman to leave, but the next day when the cowboy came back he was still there. So the cowboy gave him a good whipping. Several years later they met one day in San Angelo and the cowboy said, 'I whipped you one time.'

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The old Dutchman said, 'Yes, but while you was whipping me, my sheep was eating your veeds (weeds).'

"Another time this same old Dutchman drove his sheep hard into a cattlemen's territory and took one of his wagon wheels off of the wagon 6 [?] it under some thick brush. So when the ranchman came along the and told him to move he said, 'Vell, one of my wagon wheels broke down and [?] [into town?] to be fixed and as soon ad it gets here, I vill move on.' The next day, the ranchman came back and he was still there. The ranchman said, 'I thought I told you to get off my ranch.' But the Dutchman still insisted his wagon was broken down. So the rancher decided to take a look for himself and found the wheel in the [?] of thick brush.

"I crossed the Pecos once with 1,000 head of sheep, we took them across on wagon beds with the use of some extra lumber. I got the lumber from John [?]. We were taking the sheep to [???] Mexico. It took two months to make the trip. This was in 1903. We didn't stay in New Mexico but one [month?]. I didn't like it there. [????], and one day I drove my sheep in to drink and when they [??] up, they walked out and twenty-five of them lay right there and died. So we headed back to Texas. After we crossed the river, we stopped and lambded out the sheep on the O. T. [Lord?] ranch. We had two herders, my wife and myself. It took about a month and a half to get them lambded out and we came on down to [Edwards?] County.

"I have worked a lot with Old Man Henry [?]. His ranch joined mine out on the Pecos. He had a big outfit. [He?] owned about 4,000 head of cattle. He used to come riding up to my house at full speed and tell my wife, 'I want to borrow 10,000.' She would tell him all right to get down. And when he come he would say, 'Oh, a glass of [??] will do just as well.

"[One morning my?] my father and me caught ten [lobos?] [???] killing [chickens, and calves?]. He said he would give us ten dollars apiece for all he caught. So we went down to his ranch [one night and spent?] the night. Slept on our saddle blankets for beds and

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started out the next day at daybreak Well, when we got to the top of the mountain the 7 dogs smelled the lobos and went after them. They were running with the wind. They went down in the canyon and bayed a lobo pup. I jumped off my horse and went down after him. He was a little fellow and I killed him with a stick. We went on a little farther up the canyon and killed nine more. They were about the size of a bob cat. But the big ones killed a dog for me that same day. They were sure bad about killing dogs.

“Another time down on Independence (a tributary of the Pecos), we heard a pack of lobo wolves running a herd of two-year-old cattle. The lobos would howl every now and then and that is how we knew it was lobos after the cattle. I have been told, before I went there that the lobos were so bad that a pack of them would herd a bunch of cattle just like cowboys. There would be four or five lobos and they would watch their chance to run in and get a calf. Then one would run and drag the calf out and they'd be on it eating the calf before they had it killed.

“We camped on the Nueces River one time and in the night I herd a calf bawling. I knew a lobo had him down and was eating him before he ever killed it. They nearly always start eating on the hams, or in the flank. I sure hated to lie there and let him kill that calf, but I wouldn't get up and go down there for I didn't want the other boys to know I had gun on.

“Once when I lived out in the Pecos country, I started out to buy a ranch. I had been leasing range and I wanted to buy a ranch of my own. It was in January and the ground was froze. I would ride all day long and when night would come , I would lay down and sleep on my saddle blanket and cover with my slicker. Of course I always built a fire but the ground would freeze most every night. Well, I rode like this for about a week. I 8 looked the country over but, I didn't find a ranch that suited me so I started back home. Just before I reached home I begin to feel bad. Everything got dark like does when a sand storm comes up. When I got home I was a sick man. My wife filled a tub with hot water and put me in blankets. I sure warmed up. I sweated so much it rolled down the blanket and on

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the floor. Then she gave me a sponge in cold water. It was what I needed I guess for it felt while I was taking it. But I almost fainted when it was over. Anyway I guess she knocked the pneumonia.

"I knew a good woman roper up on the Nueces. Her name was Sallie Novel and she later married Will McBee. She and her sister were in the goat pen roping kids by the fore feet. We came alone with a herd of cattle, and one of the men went to rope a calf and missed. The girl came out and says, 'Let me get him for you.' So she got the calf's fore-feet the first throw. He took the calf and turned and said, 'I've been a cowboy all my life but that girl sure did out-rope me.

"Of course you know that most anything can 'stampede' a herd — little things or big things. I was in a little run once over on Paint Creek. One morning we had the cattle penned and a rooster flew up on the fence, flopped his wings and crowed, and out they came, bringing half the side of the pen with them. But we soon got 'em checked.

"Another time , it rained all night and we had a run. You never want to make your bed down close to a herd. But this night the ground was so wet I had made my bed on a big flat rock close to the herd. About four o'clock in the morning they 'stampeded.' It was lucky for me they went the opposite direction from where I was sleeping. We didn't save a cow but the next day we got most of them back. If you were never near a run of a big herd, you can't imagine the noise they make. In day time when they get to running their old eyes just bug out like a crawfish's eyes.

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"We ranched out on Devil's River fifty miles north of Del Rio for ten years. We had about 3,000 head of goats my wife and myself did all the 'tending to these goats. We did all the sheering and the packing of the wool into the sacks. She would turn the sheering machine and I did the sheering. Sometimes we would work till twelve o'clock at night.

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"We later moved into town and lived there in Del Rio about twelve years. Our house burned down and I bought another ranch about four miles out of town. A fellow came along one day and wanted it worse than I did and I sold it to him. So we moved to Uvalde. No, I didn't buy no ranch here, I don't like this country for ranching."

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Mr. Anderson's wife, Mrs Mattie Anderson tells the following incident which happened in her girlhood days when she was on a cattle drive:

"I came to Edwards County in about '91, with my sister and brother-in-law. We came from Hamilton County and brought a herd of cattle. I was the biggest cowboy they had. It was so dry coming out the cattle almost starved to death.

I had to ride all day, I would start at sunup or before and ride all day without a bite of dinner. The first frijoles I ever et, one of the cowboys and me started to supper one evening when we saw a smoke out to one side. We rode out to it and it was a sheep camp. As we rode up, they had two barrels of water sitting out in front of the tent. Our horses had not had water since the day before. His horse drank out of one barrel and mine the other. We had not had anything to eat since the day before. George went into the tent and found some of these beans. I says, 'What 10 kind of beans are they?' He said, 'Hold you hand.' And he poured my hand full of beans with out giving me time to take off my gloves. We stayed right there and et one hand full right after another till we et every one that poor old Mexican had cooked. George looked around and said 'Miss Mattie, here is some bread,' and he brought out a plate of tortilla. I tried one but it was just like buckskin to me.

"Well we got our horses and started back and met my sister and brother-in-law. They had found water and had our supper cooked. As we rode up to camp and I fell off my horse,

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my sister says, 'Aint you starved to death?' I told her no, all I wanted was coffee. She said she didn't have no coffee made so I got on my horse and went back to the herd.

"Next day we went on till we found a big lake of water. Believe me, we had to ride to stay with them cattle when they smelt that water. They were strung out so far , three of us had to ride in the lead and when we couldn't hold 'em. Well, we got to the water and everything sorta quieted down. I asked George what that was out there filling up those barrels with water. He said it was a Mexican. That was the first Mexican I ever saw. I asked him if that was the kind of fellow that cooked them beans and he said it was. I said, 'Well, if I had knowed that , I sure wouldn't et 'em.'"

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